



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY BASED WATER SOCIETIES AND REFLECTION ON COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

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ABSTRACT

While most urban and municipal area people are provided water supply through centralized water supply mechanism, approach of rural safe water supply shifted from supply driven approach to demand driven approach, becoming community in to major component in water governance. Community participation is an essential factor for continuous operations and sustainability. There are different factors affecting for community participation like, nature of community, nature of the leadership, ownership of the project, right approach and concentration etc.. Community participation will be challenged in a situation which is failed one or some of the above factors. Through the community participation, community empowerment will be taken place, driving communities to address their social and community challenges by themselves ensuring sustainability in their community development challenging to their poverty

1. INTRODUCTION

WHILE most urban and municipal area people are provided water supply through centralized water supply mechanism, approach of rural safe water supply shifted from supply driven approach to demand driven approach, becoming community in to major component in water governance. The inability of governments to provide water supply service due to resource constrains and led to widespread adaptation of community managed rural water supply projects were initiated since early 1980. (WHO 1996; World Bank, 2003; Harvey & Red 2007) Since that, rural safe water supply has been initiated in different countries using funds of different governments and NGOs. Some of rural water supply projects were success while some of the projects were failed due to miscellaneous reasons. According to the approach, community participation also was varying in different rural safe drinking water supply projects. Especially this approach became in to the solution for relative high construction and maintenance cost which governments should be bearded. Community contribution and utilizing effective social capital utilization reduced potential cost while ensuring sustainability using community participation in rural water supply projects.

According to UN, 2003, Participation is a criterion for effective governance where all citizens, both men and women should have a voice, directly or through intermediary organizations representing their interests, through the process of policy and decision making. As World Bank, 2003, the underlying expectation in the use of community participation is that, putting communities in charge or actively engaging them in their own development will harness their social capital to improve livelihoods, leading sustainable development. According to that, the power of decision making and their voice became prominent in participatory approach.

The main component of demand driven approach has become in to community driven mechanism and community participation is the major essence of it. Rural water supply largely linked with community participation. (Hassan et al, 2010, Muhammad A., Syeda M., 2014) There has also been a paradigm shift from top bottom to bottom up approach in development which recognizes the benefits of engaging the community and allows for local participation in decision making which has been welcomed even in rural water supply. (IRC, 2003; Garande & Dagg, 2005) According to that the decision making body is the community and the successful decision making could be achieved only through community participation. According to that situation, without community participation, the successes and the accuracy of the process might be doubtful. This same aspect became in to the main subject of different literatures. Several authors have emphasized the importance of learning in development of community based resource management including the management of water supply infrastructure. (Uphoff, 1992; Ostrom, 1990; Brett A., Margaret M. Tammo S., 2007)

In the status of bottom up approach, community as the main decision body, in the same sector, same as for a successful policy formation, community participation is essential, opening door for community voice in policy making process. Study conducted by Njogu in 2009, on challenges and opportunities for sustainable water supply and demand management in Ruiru Municipality, recommends that various institutions mandated with policy formulation should adopted bottom up decision making process by embracing public participation in planning issues. This is one of major indirect benefit in community side to get opportunity for their actual needs.

Community participation is considered one of the prerequisites for the improved performance of water sector by donors of the development projects. (Tharkildsen, 1988) Especially the organizations contributed for community voice and advocacy, the approach with bottom up will make huge impact in their projects. In India, the village named Gangadevipally is the good example for the impacts of waking up the voice of community for development through community based development and increasing community participation. Further it made ownership of the project to the community with community participation. It refers to willingness of users and their capabilities to take over the charge of schemes. (Muhammad A., Syeda M., 2014)

Schouten and Moriarty, 2003 defined community participation as management of tasks related to operations and maintenance of development schemes. Accordingly, the decision power regarding management, administration and governance will be fully authorized by community while the only supervision part is done by state authorized agencies. In that, the large propotion of involvement will be done by community with community participation. Community participation refers to community involvement that instills a sense of ownership (Beyene, 2012) and enhances sustainability of development projects (Kasiaka, 2004; Admassu et al, 2002; Bill, 2007; Morua et al, 2007; Harvey and Reed, 2006, Muhammad A., Syeda M., 2014) Community participation refers as involvement of community members in terms of financial contributions, planning, execution, operation and maintenance ensure the sustainability of development projects such as water supply schemes. (Gebrehiwot, 2006; Davis and Liyer 2002, Muhammad

A., Syeda M., 2014)

In planning for water supply in poor communities in the developing world, technological design specifications have been dominated by the donor and the implementing agencies, while communities have been typically left out this critical design and planning phase. (Brett A., Margaret M. Tammo S., 2007) As mentioned above in different places, this might be failed, due to lack of community participation. Finally in this status, the project sustainability will be questionable due to lack of community ownership. For project sustainability, the through community participation, the project ownership will be automatically transferred to the community ensuring long term sustainability of rural safe drinking water supply projects.

2. BACKGROUND OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY BASED WATER PROJECTS

In demand driven approach of water supply through community based water systems, community participation is the most important aspect for the success of the project. Participation is a concept of referring to the involvement of local people in the activities related to the projects. Main five elements of participation are problem identification, decision making, planning, implementation, evaluation and electing leaders. (Mwaseba, 1991)

Participation with rural development project perspective is people's involvement in the decision making process implementing programmes, their sharing in benefits of development programmes in their involvement in the evaluation of such programmes. (Cohan & Uphoff, 1997) Further it defines the ownership and active engagement of community in whole project life cycle.

The study conducted by Anna M. in 2008, in Kenya revealed a Greater number of male participated in the projects more than women. Age group 25-44 years participated more for water projects. (Anna M. 2008) For water societies, there is no significant relationship between level of participation and marital status and education in Tanzania. (Anna M. 2008) But according to the different countries and social and cultural contexts, it might be varied in wide range aspects. In some Asian contexts, in many projects and CBOs, there are larger number of women participation, because men are engaging in income generation activities in the day time.

Participation as a process through which stakeholder's influence and show control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them (World Bank, 1995) In participation active process by which the beneficiary or client groups influence the direction and execution of a development project with a view of enhancing their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values. (Paul, 1987) Participation in active and meaningful involvement of the masses of people at different levels in decision making process for determination of society goal and allocation of resource to achieving them and in the execution of resulting programmes and projects. (United Nations, 1975)

Amarasinghe, 2009 noted that community participation is high during planning and construction and waned often commissioning and it is depended on several factors, such as community leadership and organization, capabilities of CBO, ability to raise and manage the necessary finance, choices of technology ensuring the ability to maintain and meet water quality needs over the design life, economies of scale, the need to move away from voluntary to paid labors need for ongoing training and need for routine monitoring by external agencies.

3. IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN DEMAND DRIVEN APPROACH IN WATER SUPPLY

Participation at the community level has been identified as one of the most important essential principle in rural development projects as it has the potential to give communities access and control over their water sources. (OECD, 1985; Waithaka et al, 2015)

Community participation in rural water management is purportedly a key element for community water project to be sustainable. (Ann W., 2009) According to the World Bank, 1995, importance of participation in development projects is,

- It can help create and maintain stable democracies and good governance as well as economic growth.
- When poor and marginalized people participate in development projects, they acquire skills and development attitudes, which may facilitate their integration in to the wider society. From bank's view point, participation also improves the financial and development sustainability of projects there by enhancing portfolio performance.

- Participation improves project design by reducing the cost of obtaining accurate and site specific data on environmental, social and cultural factors as well as stakeholders felt needs in priorities, also project managers, can't get input from all groups including people often marginalized in the development process.
- A well designed participatory process can help resolve or manage conflict by identifying common ground or a neglecting structure which will allow benefits to accurate to all sets of interests. By discovering and resolving potential conflicts early in project cycle, participation can reduce the cost of supervision later.

For community water project, to be sustainable, the community must own it through their participation from its inception and onward. (Ann W., 2009) Community management is widely accepted principle approach for sustainable development of rural water supply in developing countries.(Koestler, 2008) Lockwood, 2004 identified common principle of community management which include participation, control, ownership and cost sharing. Further Community participation can ensure that different needs and problems of the community are integrated in the project objectives. (Miningka, 2000)

As the benefit, Empowerment of stakeholders through participation can improve the environmental management process (Murdock et al. 2005; Simonovia & Akten, 2006; Giordana. Etat, 2007; Prager & Nagel, 2008) Pena and Cunha, 1997, examined conditions under which participation does not lead to optimum results. They note that often political and local power, socio economic hierarches, and lack of information sharing can lead to negative results.

During past 30 years, the participation of water development projects in most sub Saharan African countries was the responsibility of community and central government. Unfortunately many large water projects that were established and managed by communities and central government in sub Saharan Africa failed mainly due to inadequate community participation in planning and implementation such projects (World Bank, 2016) In recent years, an increasing number of comparative studies of development projects show community participation in one of the critical component of success, empowering of the poor with ownership and project development. (Hawlett & Nagn, 2001)

Full participation of the community operation and maintenance of the scheme, technical and financial management, cost sharing for execution and operation and maintenance, strategic decision making and ownership by community are essential segments for sustainability of water supply scheme. (Lockwood, 2004) According to the research conducted by Waithaka et al, 2015, revealed as the impacts of community participation is access to adequate water supply and catchment management through the proper farming methods and soil conversation measures.

Studies shown that change in water use behavior and sustainable management of water supply is more likely when diverse community members authoritically participate in decision making, negotiation and concerted actions. (Narayanam, 1993)

People's participation in management of natural resources has been shown to lead a number of benefits including increased effectiveness and acceptability of management actions (Esmou & Uphoff, 1984; Brett A., Margaret M. Tammo S., 2007) increased trust between communities and agencies and reduced transaction cost (Uphoff & Wijayarathne, 2000; Brett A., Margaret M. Tammo S., 2007)

4. NATURE OF PARTICIPATION AND REASONS BEHIND THE LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

Participation can be categorized as passive, manipulative, consultation, material, incentives or contributing resources, functional, interactive and self-mobilization. (Pretty & Scoones, 1995; Hawlett & Nagu, 2001)

Passive participation is people participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened through announcement by the administration or project management without listening to people's response. In there, information which is shared belongs to external professionals only. (Pretty & Scoones, 1995)

Manipulative participation is simply a pretending representative on official boards who are unelected and have no power in final decision making. (Pretty & Scoones, 1995)

Participation by consultation is where communities are involved in answering questions using questioner. It involves seeking views of the target group. The external agent defines problems, information gathering process and control analysis, there is no sharing in decision making profession, and official representatives have no power on the final decision making. (Anna M. 2008)

Public participation also helps to increase awareness of people in water resources management projects. (Anna M. 2008) Nisha 2006, argues that house hold characteristics are relatively more influential on the rate of participation measured in terms of meeting attendance and decision making.

5. CHALLENGES FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Participation of the community water projects was hindered by individual, technical and leadership related problems. (Anna M. 2008) In most of the time, individual performance and the nature of the leadership is doing a considerable role in successful participation. As an example, if leadership is holding by a person, who is having good acceptance and trust among community members, participation might be successful. Further when there is a problem of having leadership to a person with above mentioned qualities, there might be a reason to reduce community participation. Nature of the community is the other most important significant factor of affecting community participation. But successful leadership and right approach is always doing a considerable role in changing and mobilizing such communities to develop their participation.

Lifestyle and attitude of the community members would be directly affected the nature of their participation. As an example, in estate context of Sri Lanka, is difficult to get their participation in most of the day times due to the ordinary working style and inherited dependence mind set of having everything from their estate management. Some rural area communities are also having same depending mind set, which is directly challenging their participation. As field experiences of many development practitioners, it is a time lasting process of mobilizing them to change their mind set encouraging participatory process of their own development, should be achieved by them.

Participation in a community with a depending mentality is a challenge and depended upon the benefits. Community development and conscientization is the important factor to empower their participation and it is a time lasting acting of empowering these communities. Empowerment should be a different approach for this like community to ensure sustainability.

Vincent 2003, mentioned it must aptly when she suggested that hydrological projects be challenged alongside the promotion of participatory process and democratic partnerships in order to bring about poverty focused action for water management. Depending on focus and actions, community participation might be challenged as their need. If the project is addressing for their need, but it did not conscientize them as their need, the participation will be challenged.

In many parts of the world, there are number of CBOs that participation is challenged due to inability of fulfilling community water need. Not having sufficient amount of water, not provided quality service due to lack of funding and technological capacity and water scarcity etc.. were found as major reasons behind the challenging community participation. As a whole problem in approach, service quality and need of community are the factors of challenging community participation in community based development projects.

6. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION LEADS TO COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Cohen & Uphoff in 1977, revealed participation includes people's involvement in decision making process, implementing programmes, their sharing in benefits of development programmes and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programmes. (Hedayat A. 2009) Asharulkhadi, 1996, Participation as an end in itself focus on participation as a process in which people are directly involved in shaping, deciding and taking part in the development process from the bottom up perspective. (Hedayat A. 2009)

Participation become a process of achieving greater individual fulfilment, personal development, self-awareness and some immediate satisfaction. (Richardson, 1983; Hedayat A. 2009) In participation, as an end, people directly involved in process, they will get power and control over decisions that effect on their lives. Thus participation as an end that leads to empowerment. (Hedayat A. 2009)

Participation by manipulating or passive participation cannot empower community, but both interactive participation and participation by self-mobilization can be highly empowered. (Hedayat A. 2009) Rakodi 1991; Friedmann 1996, different paradigm sees empowerment as the true and of participation. Abott 1996, Empowerment will be achieved through participation as an end.

7. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION AS A RESULT OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Community participation is a consultative empowerment process designed to establish communities as effective decision making entities. (Gnijit & shah, 1998) Zafer (1994) emphasized the need for community involvement to ensure continuous benefits of development programme.

Participation is a central concept in and foundation principle of community development. (Hedayat A. 2009) Most important agencies of development emphasis on participation as a key concept on development and they believe that without participation, sustainable development wouldn't be achieved. (Hedayat A. 2009)

Community participation is seen as a means to achieve a particular end as it enables communities to better manage their socio economic environment to help improve food security, to improve access to basic social service or to reserve the process of natural resource degradation with the ultimate goal of reducing rural poverty and promoting sustainable development. (World Bank, 2003)

Zooneveld, 2001 and Waithaka, 2015 revealed that participation in local governance found that participation worked better when citizens felt that the initiative had concrete aims that were likely to have a direct positive impact on their daily lives.

Community development movement linked to local governments to promote better living conditions for whole community with active participation and possible initiatives for community. (Frances, 1990; Hedayat A. 2009)

Sustainability and effectiveness of community development depends on the level of people's participation and concerned agencies. (Hedayat A. 2009)

8. HOW COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION MAKE SUCCESS IN COMMUNITY BASED WATER PROJECTS

Rural water experts, the World Bank and other donor agencies argue that community participation is fundamental to the success of water supplies in rural areas particularly in developing countries. (Schanter & Moriarty, 2003)

Community participation in Faisalabad district in Pakistan has built trust among community members as management committee. (Muhammad A., Syeda M., 2014)

The formal association between community participation in operational and management of programme shows sense ownership of the community. (Muhammad A., Syeda M., 2014) Therkildsen, 1998; reported that sustainability of water supply programme cannot be achieved without the involvement of the community at the planning stage. Davis and Liyar 2002 and Muhammad A., Syeda M., 2014 illustrated contribution of the community in the form of money, labour and material are the general way of community participation which leads to the sustainability of rural water supply project.

Strengthen the role of participation as a platform for learning in water supply management should be seen as a cornerstone strategy in enhancing the sustainability of portable water supply. (Brett A., Margaret M. Tammo S., 2007)

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